

Opening Statement of the Honorable Fred Upton
Subcommittee on Communications and Technology
Hearing on “Oversight of the Federal Communications Commission”
December 12, 2013

(As Prepared for Delivery)

Today we welcome a fully constituted FCC back to the Energy and Commerce Committee. The last time we heard from the full commission was July 2012. The FCC has regulatory authority over a sector of our economy that is critical to innovation, jobs, and our nation’s global leadership in technology. The communications sector is also an integral part of our daily lives, connecting us to loved ones, alerting us to natural disasters, and entertaining and educating us every day. As the regulatory agency of these industries, the Federal Communications Commission has the immensely important task of promoting growth and competition.

Our hearing today will examine actions the FCC has taken since the commission last appeared and set expectations for the agency’s future. As the oversight authority for the commission, our committee works hard to ensure that the FCC functions to the benefit of American consumers and companies. We also want this agency to function efficiently and transparently, as all government agencies should. I’m glad to say that this is not a partisan concern – a bipartisan majority of the full committee reported an FCC Process Reform bill yesterday that will help the FCC operate more openly and effectively.

And the bill is needed. There are several stalled proceedings and ambiguous projects at the commission that cause concern to me and other members of this committee. We have sent several letters in the past months regarding media ownership proceedings. Subcommittee Vice Chairman Latta has even gone to the extent of drafting a bill to end the cable set-top box integration ban, a bill that seems to make a lot of sense and which, perhaps the FCC should have considered doing a while ago. My sincere hope is to start a productive dialogue today with our esteemed witnesses on these and the many other important issues pending at the commission.

Commissioner O’Rielly, I’d like to welcome you back to Energy and Commerce, a committee you know well, having once served on the staff here. Chairman Wheeler, we welcome you and look forward to working together during your tenure as chairman.

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